



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WSDA encourages residents to celebrate Native Plant Appreciation Week

OLYMPIA – Homeowners concerned about maintaining a garden in this year's drought should consider going native.

Governor Christine Gregoire has declared May 1-7 Native Plant Appreciation Week and several of the state's nurseries participating in the event will be pointing out how well native plants survive in dry conditions.

"The value of using native plants is that once they are established, they are drought tolerant," said Catherine Hovanic, administrator of the Washington Native Plant Society. "Integrating native plants into a landscape is a good, smart decision, particularly from a water-conservation standpoint."

In proclaiming Native Plant Appreciation Week, Gov. Gregoire noted that Washington is home to more than 3,000 native plant species ranging from desert plants to rain forest species. Of those, more than 350 are listed as rare by the Washington Natural Heritage Program.

The week also provides governmental agencies, non-profit groups and environmental organizations an opportunity to show what they are doing to protect native plants and restore native plant habitats. In addition to the governor, more than two dozen cities and counties have issued proclamations. The goal of Native Plant Appreciation Week is to encourage residents to learn more about native plant species and how they can protect them.

"Although it's an opportunity to educate, Native Plant Appreciation Week is primarily an opportunity to celebrate our native floral abundance, our amazing bio-diversity and all the good work being done to protect and preserve it," Hovanic said.

About 30 nurseries around the state are planning special events during Native Plant Appreciation Week, such as courses on landscaping or gardening with native plants, native plant garden tours, and native plant restoration projects. For more information on the various activities, visit the Washington Native Plant Society Web site at www.wnps.org.

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